

YOUR LIVING HOPE

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Hope is confident expectation. Whether or not we have any good reason to expect a good outcome, our minds seem wired to believe that if there is any chance that a situation will turn out good, then maybe it will turn out well. Our ability to hope is why we can cheer for our losing team until the clock runs out. It is how a person with cancer will say defiantly, "I'm going to beat this thing!" He just might do so. If hope is confident expectation, despair is the absence of hope. There are people who have no hope or little hope: diagnosed with a terminal illness, the doctor recommends hospice care; children stuck in a cycle of poverty and unemployment; economic desperation in which one thinks the best thing he can do with \$20 is buy lottery tickets. Worst is him who is without hope because he is without God. There are those who are *"separated from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world."* Such a person dies without any hope that anything awaits him other than the grave, or worse. This is the person who finds himself in need of help from the Almighty but who has no relationship with God such that he might expect that God would hear his prayer and help.

As Christians we have a special kind of hope. It is not based on our minds' ability or willingness to expect the best, to see the glass as half full, or to keep a positive attitude . Our hope is based on the promises and faithfulness of God. We have been *"born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* When we face an uncertain future, an unexpected turn for the worse, or even the inevitable losses that come into every life from time to time, we have hope based in confidence that God, through Jesus Christ, has promised to bring good into our lives here on earth and to bring us to be with him forever in the life to come. We can face life differently than those do who have no such hope. This is hope for the Christian: Whatever comes your way, confidently and consistently expect that God is faithful and he will keep his promises. (Eph. 2:12, 1 Pet. 1:3, 1 Th. 4:13)